

193—7.10(17A,272C) Presiding officer.

7.10(1) The presiding officer in all licensee disciplinary contested cases shall be the board, a panel of board members, or a panel of nonboard member specialists as provided in Iowa Code subsections 272C.6(1) and (2). When board members act as presiding officer, they shall conduct the hearing and issue either a final decision or, if a quorum of the board is not present, a proposed decision. As provided in subrule 7.10(4), the board may be assisted by an administrative law judge when the board acts as presiding officer.

7.10(2) In cases which do not pertain to licensee discipline, the board may act as presiding officer or may notify the parties that an administrative law judge will act as presiding officer at hearing and issue a proposed decision. The use of an administrative law judge as presiding officer is only an option in cases which do not pertain to licensee discipline because only the board may conduct licensee discipline hearings pursuant to Iowa Code section 272C.6. Any party to a nondisciplinary case who wishes to request that the presiding officer assigned to render a proposed decision be an administrative law judge employed by the department of inspections and appeals must file a written request within 20 days after service of a notice of hearing which identifies the presiding officer as the board. The board may deny the request only upon a finding that one or more of the following apply:

a. Neither the board nor any officer of the board under whose authority the contested case is to take place is a named party to the proceeding or a real party in interest to that proceeding.

b. There is a compelling need to expedite issuance of a final decision in order to protect the public health, safety, or welfare.

c. The case involves a disciplinary hearing to be held by the board pursuant to Iowa Code section 272C.6.

d. The case involves significant policy issues of first impression that are inextricably intertwined with the factual issues presented.

e. The demeanor of the witnesses is likely to be dispositive in resolving the disputed factual issues.

f. Funds are unavailable to pay the costs of an administrative law judge and an interboard appeal.

g. The request was not timely filed.

h. The request is not consistent with a specified statute.

7.10(3) The board shall issue a written ruling specifying the grounds for its decision within 20 days after a request for an administrative law judge is filed. If the ruling is granted, the administrative law judge assigned to act as presiding officer and issue a proposed decision in a nondisciplinary contested case shall have a J.D. degree unless waived by the board.

7.10(4) The board or a panel of board members when acting as presiding officer may request that an administrative law judge perform certain functions as an aid to the board or board panel, such as ruling on prehearing motions, conducting the prehearing conference, ruling on evidentiary objections at hearing, assisting in deliberations, or drafting the written decision for review by the board or board panel.

7.10(5) All rulings by an administrative law judge who acts either as presiding officer or assistant to the board are subject to appeal to the board pursuant to rules 7.31(17A) and 7.32(17A). A party must timely seek intra-agency appeal of prehearing rulings or proposed decisions in order to exhaust adequate administrative remedies. While a party may seek immediate board or board panel review of rulings made by an administrative law judge when sitting with and acting as an aid to the board or board panel during a hearing, such immediate review is not required to preserve error for judicial review.

7.10(6) Unless otherwise provided by law, board members, when reviewing a proposed decision of a panel of the board or an administrative law judge, shall have the powers of and shall comply with the provisions of this chapter which apply to presiding officers.